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# Economics, education and citizenship

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In the current political economic dispensation, it is important to revisit the opportunities for citizenship, cooperative, and public economics and the responsibility of economics teachers. In doing so, it is essential to analyse the nature of the dominant pedagogical philosophy of individualism, probe what alternatives could be embraced, investigate whether citizenship is a superior compass, and ascertain how students respond to alternatives. The case study reported in this paper demonstrates not only that individualism is problematic but also that citizenship, public and cooperative economics have much prospect of success. Students who are enrolled in economics subjects could show substantial awareness of social justice and, based on their own account, that awareness could be increased. Overall, students appreciate the opportunity to challenge the status quo. If so, citizenship and cooperative economics have a place in the study of economics – contrary to the widely held view that they are irrelevant. It is the responsibility of teachers to expose the ideology of this impossibility view, emphasise the possibilities for cooperative economics and citizenship, and empower students to question and become citizens.

*Keywords: citizenship, cooperative economics, property, teachers*

## Introduction

It is the responsibility of economics teachers to empower students through teaching cooperative and public economics and citizenship (in the context of teaching people to be good citizens). This responsibility is much like 'the responsibility of intellectuals' more generally (Chomsky, 1967), but economics teachers are also in a unique position. They have a particularly sensitive responsibility because our material conditions of life depend on the ideas and practices of their students, as they assume important decision-making positions in the global system. For this reason, and because, with few respectable exceptions, studies in cooperative and public economics have focused less on teaching (see, for a review, Geerkens, 2008; Marini & Thiry, 2018), it is important to probe how this mandate of economics teachers can best be used. What pedagogical principles must be challenged? What alternatives could be embraced? Can cooperative economics and citizenship animate an actual subject

of study and, if so, how are such subjects received by students?

## Individualism

The principal mainstream economics philosophy to be challenged by political economists is individualism. According to the proponents of this pedagogical world view, economics teachers must simply be guided by a demand-driven philosophy. Economics teachers, the argument goes, must simply supply the skills demanded by students who enrol in economics courses. According to this view, such students only seek skills on how to make money within the 'reality' of the capitalist system. In this sense, teaching how to solve the problems of accumulation for industry must, therefore, be the primary focus of teachers because that commitment is assumed to be the primary demand by students. Making students job-ready is an apt description of how teachers of economics must see themselves. Theoretically, this line of thinking

can be located within the human capital theory of Gary Becker (1962) and George Stigler (1970) but, in modern times, they can also be seen in the work of David Colander (2003) and Edward Glaeser (2011) to the extent that their version of human capital theory prioritises individual skills as the primary determinant of employability and, when employed, of the wage relation.

For others, notably the Dutch philosopher Michael Merry, under capitalism, there are no options for citizenship, public and cooperative economics education to flourish (see, for example, Merry, 2018a, 2018b). According to him, in a capitalist system, the function of education is to serve private interests. So, even if it were desirable to teach cooperative economics and citizenship, it is impossible to do so, as education under capitalism is, inherently, designed to serve this economic system.

From these perspectives, education is entirely a private affair and the public must not support it financially. Bryan Caplan's arguments in the book, *The Case Against Education: Why the Education System is a Waste of Time and Money* (2018), exemplify this line of thinking. The teaching implications of this view are undeveloped even in the best books on methodological individualism such as S. Charusheela's *Structuralism and Individualism in Economic Analysis* (2005) and Sonya Scott's *Architectures of Economic Subjectivity* (2013). The key teaching practice of this pedagogy is the top-down lecture model.

What are the implications of pedagogical individualism for teachers? First, teachers must follow the pattern of demand by students. Teachers who deviate from satisfying the pre-conceived wants of students will be poorly rated by the students, as the students will find their teaching irrelevant. Second, if teachers merely affirm what students want and there are problems for everyone in the world, the teachers must be absolved of responsibility because, as with the 'Nuremberg Defence' or the 'Apartheid Defence', the teachers were merely following superior orders: the consumer-student is literally, and figuratively, 'king'. In *The Mirage of Social Justice*, the Austrian economist Friedrich Hayek provides a distinctive defence (Hayek, 1976/1998; Brown, 2010): markets are impersonal, so neither justice nor injustice can be attributed to anyone. The concept of social justice is, from this perspective, entirely bankrupt. As it is not clear to whom social justice is directed, it follows that it is not clear to whose standards justice must conform; and, hence, it is not clear how social justice can co-exist with citizenship. Third, even if teachers wanted to, they could not possibly succeed in teaching cooperative economics and citizenship.

Markets, then, are not only designed to reflect these sentiments, they are also the best allocator of resources and the best mechanism to aid in decision making. Consequently, teaching 'critical thinking' is rare in economics courses in which students are encouraged to uncritically follow the theories of the masters. In one recent, widely discussed media review of 172 general economics modules at seven universities in the UK, it was established that 78 per cent of exam questions simply asked the student to show mastery of theories and equations without any independent or critical thinking, while for compulsory subjects, sometimes called 'fundamentals', and the more widely taken by economics students, 93 per cent of exam questions had no place for critical analysis and thinking (Guardian, 2016).

Most of the claims that percolate the design of such programs are, however, based on untested assumptions. Therefore, it is important to test these claims systematically and empirically. The existing attempts at doing so have been highly informative. The contributions to two recent special issues of the *Journal of Australian Political Economy* (Nos. 75 and 80), as well as the various chapters in *Advancing Pluralism in Teaching Economics* (Decker *et al.*, 2019), show what is wrong with economics teaching and why economists remain adamantly opposed to criticisms of their pedagogical approaches. Kavous Ardalan's recent book, *Case Method and Pluralist Economics: Philosophy, Methodology and Practice* (2018), 'applies a multiparadigmatic approach to education' (p. x) and, as Ardalan notes, 'The book argues that both the case method and pluralist economics emanate from the same foundational philosophy that views the world as being socially constructed and that both of them advocate pluralism.' (p. x).

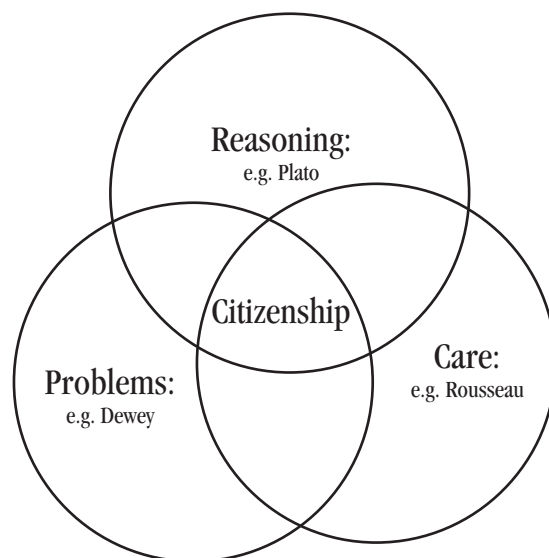
Strong on the philosophical foundations of alternative pedagogy, Ardalan's study can be better demonstrated with an actual case study, especially focused on teaching property economics, a field that has received little critical engagement by political economists, although it is a major area for investigating, for example, the property relations that were central to the last global crisis. Masson Gaffney's (2015) emphasis on the role of property economics in the last financial crisis is important in this sense, but that work does not examine how an alternative teaching pedagogy in property economics might contribute to redressing what Anne Haila (2017) has called 'institutionalising the property mind'. Within the context of the responsibility of economics teachers, that is what a citizenship pedagogy seeks to do.

## Citizenship

Political economists can embrace citizenship as a superior pedagogical framework. From this perspective, studying economics is not about oneself at all but, instead, about helping others, the entire world society, and the environment. In her paper 'Teaching economics', Joan Robinson, the eminent Cambridge economist, noted that 'The serious student is often attracted to economics by humanitarian feeling and patriotism - he wants to learn how to choose economic policies that will increase human welfare' (Robinson, 1960, p. 173). By welfare, Robinson, means citizenship; not the individualism in 'welfare economics', which Robinson calls 'a system of ideas based on a mechanistic psychology of a completely individualistic pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, which no one believes to be a correct account of human nature, dished up in algebraical formulae which do not even pretend to be applicable to actual data' (Robinson, 1960, p. 173).

Citizenship is about fellow-feeling. It can include self-love, even self-interest that does not harm others, but citizenship is opposed to selfishness and individualism. In his keynote address to the International Association for Citizenship, Social and Economic Education (IACSEE), Richard Pring (2016) notes that citizenship includes a strong concern for the public good, a nuanced understanding of political context, a focus on social justice and a commitment to civic society. So, citizenship is not only an academic pursuit, or even just a political activity of asserting rights and meeting obligations. Citizenship is, in addition, a bigger question of one's contribution to the common good. There is the understanding part, the doing part, and the action part of citizenship entailing taking action to ensure, to enhance, or to maintain a climate of citizenship. Detailed elaboration of these ideas can be found on the pages of *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, the flagship journal of IACSEE.

Many other concerned citizens and citizen organisations have contributed to this effort. Over the years, the Committee on the Political Economy of the Good Society published the journal, *The Good Society*, to emphasise the importance of citizenship education. Indeed, the journal now elevates 'civic studies' to the position of what Trygve Throntveit (2016, p.132) has called 'subtitular eponym' to animate a renewed emphasis on demanding civic rights and giving civic duties to one another, to society, and to the environment. To 'Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning' is the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4. Target 4.7 is



Source: Broom, 2010

**Figure 1: Teaching citizenship**

about education that promotes global citizenship (United Nations, 2018). According to the General Secretary of the National Tertiary Education Union, 'Education trade unions are part of the solution not part of the problem. After all SDG 4 depends on the supply and knowledge of qualified education professionals in all sectors' (McCulloch, 2018, p. 2).

Can this philosophy ground university subjects in the current political economic dispensation? Economists think not, but Catherine Broom of the Education Department at the University of British Columbia has shown that it can. She offers three examples, as shown in Figure 1.

Broom's conceptualisation gives three, intertwining dimensions of citizenship education. The first draws on Plato's dialogue to develop students' critical reasoning skills that enable engagement with the concerns of society. Here, the teacher leads a process of turning students into concerned thinkers. Rousseau's approach, the second, interlinked dimension to teaching citizenship, shares with Plato the concern for a citizenship education. However, Rousseau's approach more strongly emphasises teaching students citizenship based on care for their own needs. So, in this sense, while Plato's approach prioritises the leadership of the teacher, Rousseau's pedagogy is student-led, emphasising that there is no one universal 'thing' to teach students because every student cohort has its own characteristics which must drive the pedagogy. John Dewey's pedagogy being the third, interlocking aspect of citizenship pedagogy invites a learning approach

centred on investigating the political-economic structures that shape students' realities. In the Dewey approach to pedagogy, the interest of learners is in the critical analysis of, critical reflections on, and critical practicalities about transcending social problems – regardless of the positions of student and teacher.

Broom's aim in juxtaposing these approaches to developing pedagogies of citizenship is not to emphasise differences or disagreement of what is the best or right way of teaching citizenship. Rather, the point is to show that citizenship can be taught in diverse ways. My own experience as a teacher confirms Broom's contentions, but my pedagogy has been an interlocking function of a diversity of approaches, not a product of any one particular dimension. I mix aspects of Plato, Rousseau, and Dewey in the 'Property and Political Economy (PPE)' subject that I taught at the University of Technology Sydney in Australia for about ten years.

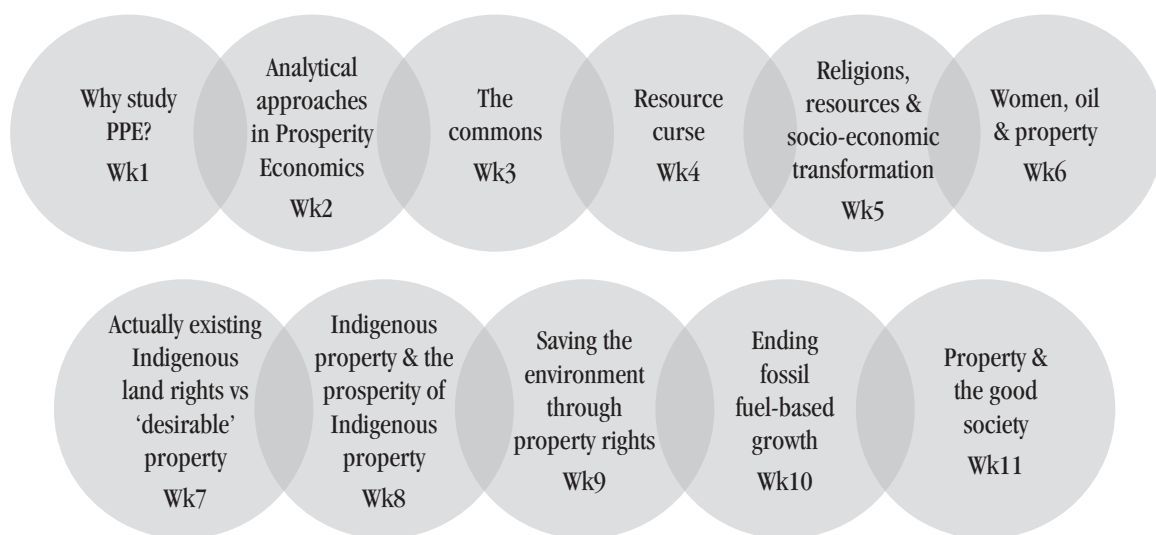
PPE is a pluralist political economy subject in the sense that it refuses to accept mainstream economics (including neoclassical and new institutional economics) as the only school of economics that has something useful to say about property relations and the property industry. The study unit questions 'property for profit' as the only valid vision for property economists, and rejects the pedagogical individualism that defines most property economics subjects. Critical of the usual view in property economics teaching that the teacher is the 'expert', presenting 'technical' ideas that cannot be questioned (Obeng-Odoom, 2017), the subject invites students to the controversies in schools of economics, how various schools conceive of property, and how the choice of one school shapes one's methodological and ontological views, as well as the range of one's policy preferences. The importance of the mainstream view is highlighted but so are its contradictions and why, despite its failings, landed interests continue to support the approach with minor adjustments such as embracing 'green property development' which, as research has shown (e.g., Wilkinson, 2013), is merely another vehicle to make profit.

PPE was born from, continues to exist to shed greater light on, and strives to provide an environment in which students can develop more sophisticated frameworks that are better able to explain, and transcend, the property basis of the dispossession and marginalisation of groups such as Indigenous people, women, and racially oppressed minorities. Generally, students are invited to an organising hypothesis that property and property relations constitute the bedrock from which social, economic, and environmental problems arise. This analytical philosophy

can be found in the teachings of John Dewey in books such as *Schools of To-morrow* (1915, with Evelyn Dewey) and *Democracy and Education* (1916/1997) which, as Christopher England (2018) has shown, were influenced by the ideas of Henry George. George is widely credited with tirelessly putting the case for starting social analysis and learning about the social world through an emphasis on land and landed property and the problems they generate, as Richard Ely, the founder of land economics as a university course, once famously noted (Ely, 1917). It does not mean that the class is all about Henry George but rather about the idea – consistently developed by George, for example, in *Social Problems* (1883), *The Crime of Poverty* (1885), and *The Science of Political Economy* (1898) – that private property is the root of all evil.

In this subject, students are also introduced to the texts written by the oppressed, including women, people of colour, and Indigenous communities. Similarly, students are introduced to the work of economists who were usually not to be found on the reading lists of the typical property economics courses around the world. Papers in economics journals are studied alongside those published in political economy journals, journals of geography, science, and education. In addition, the reports of neoliberal think tanks, including the World Bank, are studied. So, pluralism in PPE is not just in terms of engaging alternative ideas but also in terms of listening to marginalised voices, including those of students.

The three-hour PPE class is interactive and integrates feedback within the learning environment. I would teach for an hour, the students and I would discuss the readings in a tutorial that lasts another hour, and the last hour would be devoted to student debates adjudged by a panel of student-judges. My lecture slides would usually be posted before class to facilitate pre-class student preparation. Pre-class reading and pre-class reflections are enabled by making required readings and tutorial questions available to students before class. Feedback is given both within and outside class. So, dialoguing with students about the learning material, or the 'case study', is a central pedagogic practice – drawing on Paulo Freire's teaching philosophy, espoused in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) – in contrast to the prevailing functionalist philosophies animated by the lecture-heavy teaching practice in which the primary concern of the teacher is teaching to serve the subject/field; not necessarily to enhance transformative learning (Ardalan, 2018). My 'dialogue' is, however, not just about developing reason or critical thinking skills for public engagement (Plato), but also to enable the students to critically reflect on social problems (Dewey).



**Figure 2: Themes, specific topics and structure**

Dialoguing this way has been enabled by a keen interest to know more about students through engagement with others who better understand them and with students themselves (Rousseau). I have learnt, over the years, from highly effective teachers of political economy, such as Frank Stilwell, Australia's eminent teacher emeritus (Mearman, 2014; O'Donnell, 2014) either by meeting him to discuss pedagogy, by watching him teach, or by reading his extensive writings on the subject (Stilwell, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2012). I studied under Frank Stilwell and was privileged to tutor in the 'Economics as a Social Science' subject that he taught for over 40 years at the University of Sydney (see, for example, Stilwell, 2011; Obeng-Odoom, 2017).

During that time, I received feedback on my tutoring which helped me to further develop my own classes when I became a teacher myself. Since then, I have also benefited from the feedback of students whether in formal surveys organised by the university or via invited feedback when I have met the students. Colleagues have also offered feedback when I have sought it or through departmental processes, including the learning futures program. I also enrolled in the diploma in education program and completed one crucial subject on constructive alignment. In short, my teaching philosophy and teaching practices have been developed collectively.

Figure 2 provides an overview of PPE in a typical semester. In week 1, the case for the subject is firmly and clearly made, while the analytical approach taken by the subject is developed in week 2 through a critical examination of the debates between the natural rights and conventional schools of property economics. Week 3

begins with the debate about the commons, especially the so-called 'tragedy of the commons', the liberal alternative by Elinor Ostrom, and the more radical contestation by Henry George, while weeks 4 to 6 examine the ideology of resource curse and some controversies about the explanation of women's marginalisation in resource-rich societies. With week 7 seeking to introduce students to the nature of Indigenous property rights/possession-based system versus how international development agencies regard these rights, week 8 confronts the prevailing policy position that Indigenous land rights are inferior and an impediment to growth. Much of the students' education about sustainability relates to ecological modernisation, so in week 9, we revisit property-based formulations, especially the Lockean-Hardin notion that private property (and, in some respects, market instruments), about the economy, society, and environment, while week 10 appraises the debates on the limits to growth, including the idea of green buildings, the Jevons Paradox critique and the need for a radically green society, economy and environment. Week 10 brings the PPE story together, by emphasising its key themes and a unifying logic of property, citizenship, and the good society.

### **Evaluating citizenship as a pedagogical philosophy**

How have students seen their role as citizens in evaluating PPE? The results of surveys of students enrolled in the Property and Political Economy subject designed to provide/increase critical thinking, social justice



**Table 1: Responses to Survey Questions on PPE and Social Justice**

Rating	Contribution to:							
	Critical Thinking Skills	%	Social Justice Awareness	%	Driving Personal Action for Just Causes	%	Social Impact Framework	%
5 (strongly Agree)	23	49	12	26	7	15	7	15
4	20	43	21	45	14	30	24	52
3	4	9	12	26	15	32	15	3
2	0	0	2	4	9	19	0	0
1 (Strongly Disagree)	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0
Total*	47	100	47	100	47	100	46	100

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2017. \* Rounding errors apply

awareness, and a general empowering education for property economists can provide some tentative answers. Although the subject outline clearly explains that the PPE subject aims to develop these attributes, it is important to do such a survey to establish the congruence between what is promised and what students judge as delivered. In any case, it is not always that 'what an instructor thinks is being taught is what students learn; the two processes are sometimes disconnected' (Wilson & Meyer, 2011, p. 754).

Accordingly, carrying out the survey was warranted. On October 11, 2017, 49 students were issued with the questionnaires but two did not answer the questions on social justice, so the number of respondents was 47. Another student answered all the questions except the one on social impact framework, so for that specific question, the total number of responses was 46. I was out of the room throughout the time of the survey, returning only when I received the student questionnaire administrator's email to return. Upon coming back, I received a signed and sealed envelope with the completed questionnaires all of which were anonymous. This approach has been successfully used in previous studies (e.g., Wilson & Meyer, 2011; Stilwell, 2011) on social justice and pedagogy. The questions asked were informed by what political economists consider to be the key ambitions for citizenship (Schneider, 2013), namely critical thinking, social justice awareness, and the praxis of social justice.

I relied on two other approaches for complementary data. I conducted open debates about the relevance of the subject to the career of the students and relied on student feedback surveys conducted by the university over the years. These methods led to the generation of both numeric and qualitative data.

Following similar studies (Stilwell, 2011; Wilson & Meyer, 2011), I used the technique of content analysis to make the data meaningful. Starting with grouping the data

into themes with specific code names, in this approach to data analysis, frequency tables are prepared after tallying common responses to the questions that students were asked. Representative statements within certain themes are marked and quoted to animate the theme. In addition, the university carries out statistical analyses such as mean and standard deviation tests for the outcomes of the student feedback service. So, when useful, these analyses also ooze into the results of the study.

## Results

Between 2011 and 2017 when I progressively made citizenship a central pedagogical framework, the overall rating for the subject has increased from 2.21 to 4.08 (out of a maximum of 5.00). The overall rating for student satisfaction with staff has increased from 2.57 to 4.48 (out of a maximum of 5.00); and the relative ranking of the subject against the course average has risen from about 1 point below the course average to over 1 point above the course average.

The subject is also well regarded for (a) developing the critical thinking skills of students and (b) contributing to raising awareness about social injustice and teaching new ways of thinking about social justice and (c) being at least analytically relevant and hence helping to do something about it. Table 1 contains a summary of the responses by students to the question about how PPE contributes to these three attributes.

Table 1 shows that 90 per cent of the students strongly agree or agree that the subject enhanced their critical thinking. Students' qualitative comments include: 'It challenges you to think outside of your normal thought process about things you wouldn't normally consider'; 'Your debate is a prime example of this'; 'Critical thinking in the scope of property relations is core'; 'Continually

referenced critiques are discussed in every lecture', and 'By having to question every reading, we are able to come up with our own understanding of the meaning and truths of each reading.'

Through citizenship, other aspects of student learning have also been enhanced. For example, over 70 per cent strongly agreed/agreed that the subject has raised their levels of awareness about social justice. About 68 per cent strongly agreed/agreed that the subject seeks to 'contribute to increased public good, social mobility and equity; support the creation of enabling environments for communities to thrive; [and] positively influence and impact the public, the individual and the systematic forces that shape justice', a statement printed in the university 'Social Impact Framework'. Students' comments include: 'I feel the approach of the subject was even handed'; 'It explores very important and fundamental issues to poverty, income inequality which leads to more perspectives and insights'; 'Insights new ways of looking at topics such as climate + poverty'; 'I found the gist of the subject was to critique capitalism (fairly) and learn about other systems that could benefit society'; 'makes students more aware'; and 'most socially aware subject in the course'.

Students are less enthusiastic about personally committing to social justice. Indeed, only 45 per cent said the subject helped them to commit to social justice. Does this prove the well-known view that property economics students are selfish or care less about social justice, even if they are aware of it? The qualitative answers seem not. Rather, many students are concerned about social justice, so the question looked redundant. What the students praised was that they have become *more aware* and developed better analytical frameworks to understand and transcend mainstream debates.

While a small minority noted that they are practically or ideologically unconcerned – even if they are now more aware. In their words: 'I have become more aware, however some of my views do not align with what we are taught' (student rating '5' and '3' on awareness and personal action). Another said, 'I am more aware, but it is not relevant to my career. The subject is irrelevant to my future career' (student rating '3' and '1' on personal action), while a third noted that 'The real world doesn't care about feelings' (student rating '3' and '1' on personal commitment).

However, most students have become more aware and appreciate the skills they have developed to understand and analyse social (in)justice better. As one student put it: 'I don't feel I've become more aware but simply gained a deeper understanding of these topics I was familiar

with' (student who rated '3' on both awareness and personal drive). Another noted that 'I have taken on a new understanding of the concept. However, I was always surrounded [or always aware of the topic] by the topic' (student rating '4' on both awareness and personal action). For a student rating '5' and '3' on awareness and action, s/he was 'Made much more aware about issue facing oppressed people/groups. But don't really see what else I can do'; 'Able to rethink how poverty/social injustice is caused by + ways it is trapped that way'. 'Through my personality', one student said, this 'subject has made me know more' (student rating '5' and '3' respectively on awareness and personal action) and another student noted, 'I already had a personal concern for social justice. I learnt more injustices but did not increase an already long concern' (student rating '4' on awareness and '3' on personal action). These results, then, are similar to the findings of J.L Wilson and K.A. Meyer (2011, p. 757) who, in seeking to establish how much their course had contributed to social justice awareness among their students, found that the students were 'no tabula rasa or a blank slate' but had had some exposure to social justice in their varied experiences in life.

What about the career advantages of education in cooperative economics and citizenship? When asked about how the students rate the contribution of PPE to 'practical and professional skills', some 53 per cent of the students found PPE relevant and 61 per cent found it particularly relevant to 'innovation and creativity'. So, whether it is in doing further studies, working in the private sector as property consultants, or following a path in property valuation, the dominant career paths of property economics students, (on careers in property economics, see, for example, Obeng-Odoom and Ameyaw, 2010), education in citizenship has evident advantages. If so, it is the responsibility of economics teachers to reject the ideological claim that (property) economics students have no exposure to, or are not interested in, social justice. As teachers, we can, and must, embrace citizenship; not individualism.

## Conclusion

The final class of PPE typically features a debate. In 2017, the motion was 'Private property is the root of all evil'. This debate was fascinating, showing brilliant arguments from the students on both sides of the debate. The student judges voted for the affirmative team on the basis that its arguments, and evidence, better represented the social world, but praised the negative team for their analytical



skills. The takeaway point, as I discussed with the students after class, was to realise, and to keep, a critical and pluralist gaze as citizens.

The notes on my power point slides in 2017 emphasised five take away points from PPE. First, that our world today – the largely capitalist world – is based on the idea that more private property is better than more public property. Second, by both real-world evidence and logical analysis, private property in land/all natural resources generates grotesque social problems. Third, the choice is not just between private and public property – there is also common property. Fourth, beyond good/bad/blessing/evil, we have learnt that, focusing on property and property rights, can help us to understand and explain the world system and its many problems/processes and, crucially, offer ideas of transcending the capitalist world. Finally, I pointed out that the first four points demonstrate that ‘we’ (I emphasise that I too took their course as a student) should not just blend in (merely thinking of ourselves as fund managers, valuers, asset managers, corporate real estate advisers, property managers, and developers) – but also stand out and stand up as property economists seeking to analyse critically and reconstruct the world in which we live.

A key impediment to realising this aspiration is the composition, and orientation, of members of faculty. Many teachers are also property investors, so they tend to indoctrinate students along similar lines. In addition, landed interests, retained as accreditation bodies (e.g., professional associations that exist among others to offer professional services for the propertied classes), nudge the system into uncritical terrain. The self-preservation of the teachers and the activities of landed interests set up what Gunnar Myrdal (1944) called forces of ‘combined and cumulative causation’, for example, through the recruitment of teachers, the invitation of guest speakers to inspire students, and methodologies which perpetuate the system of teaching based on individualism.

Such evident indoctrination, however, cannot be allowed to continue and neither should teachers stand aloof apparently in obedience to the market. As this case study shows, (a) students who are enrolled in economics subjects show awareness of social justice (b) the awareness of social justice can be increased (c) overall, students appreciate being taught to challenge the status quo. Critical and radical pedagogies, therefore, have a place in the study of (property) economics. There are opportunities for cooperative and citizenship economics and it is the responsibility of teachers to advance them, to expose the ideology of property, to empower

students to question the practices of property, and to teach property economics as a social science rather than as an uncritical, so-called technical vocational study which, in fact, institutionalises property as a science that exists to protect, to advance, and to justify the narrow interests of propertied classes (Obeng-Odoom, 2016). My experiences suggest that, based on the opportunities provided by cooperative economics and citizenship, taking such a responsibility is highly valued by students, especially if done in dialogue with them – rather than as a sermon.

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